



April 24, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to let you know that we have lost a member of our Southern High School family. Dustin Bradshaw, a senior at our school, died at his home yesterday.

Dustin was known to everyone at our school as a kind and outgoing person who made friends easily. He was set to graduate next month and was working through our school system's Center of Applied Technology – South in an HVAC program which he very much enjoyed.

With the permission of Dustin's family, I can tell you that Dustin took his own life. No one ever knows the reasons a person takes his or her own life, but Dustin's family has asked us to share that information with you and with our students and to reiterate that there are a multitude of resources available to anyone who needs assistance. Please urge your child to ask for help or please ask for it for your child or yourself if necessary.

Available resources include our school counselors and school psychologist, who are here on every school day. They also include teachers and administrators, parents, family and community members, and faith-based leaders.

In addition our school team, counselors and school psychologists from across the county and staff from the Anne Arundel County Mobile Crisis team were available at our school today for any student or staff member who had a need to talk about their feelings. We will continue to have resources available for as long as necessary.

If you or your child are feeling depressed, please also do not hesitate to use the Anne Arundel County Crisis Warmline at 410-768-5522 or our Student Safety Hotline at 877-676-9854. Both are operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-TALK) or Crisis Text Line (text TALK to 741741) are available at any time. There also is information available on our school system's website at www.aacps.org/crisisresources.

The most important thing you can do if you are feeling depressed or know someone who is feeling that way is to share those thoughts with a caring adult who can get help.

Arrangements for Dustin are incomplete at this time. When they are finalized, we will provide that information to you. If your child wishes to attend any services, we strongly encourage you to accompany him or her. If the funeral is scheduled during school hours, students who wish to attend will need parental permission to be released from school.

I encourage you to talk openly with your child about this sad event, and to help them understand that it's OK not to have answers to every question. Children learn how to deal with grief by watching adults deal with grief. Please do not be afraid to express your emotions in front of your children. Healthy outlets of emotions can be a valuable lesson for them. Additional resources to assist you and your child can be found at www.aacps.org/crisisresources in the "Dealing with Grief" section near the bottom of the page.

Death is never an easy thing to accept, but when it comes so suddenly and to someone so young, it is even more difficult. We have, unfortunately, had to rally around each other in similar circumstances before. Together, I am confident we will help each other and Dustin's family get through these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Feuerherd
Principal

KF/bm

